

Nick Franklin: www.yes-mag.com

Tennyson's *Mariana*: footnoted



Mariana

With blackest **moss**¹ the **flower-plots**²
Were **thickly**³ **crusted**⁴, **one and all**⁵:
The **rusted**⁶ nails fell from the **knots**⁷
That held the peach to the garden-wall.
The broken **sheds**⁸ look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking⁹ **latch**¹⁰;
Weeded¹¹ and worn the ancient **thatch**¹²
Upon the lonely **moated**¹³ **grange**¹⁴.
She only said, "My life is **dreary**¹⁵,
He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
She said, "I am **awear**¹⁷", **awear**,
I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

Her tears fell with the **dews**¹⁹ **at even**²⁰;
Her tears fell **ere**²¹ the dew was dried;²²
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either **at morn**²³ or **eventide**²⁴.
After the **flitting**²⁵ of the bats,
When **thickest**²⁶ dark **did trance**²⁷ the sky,

She drew her **casement**²⁸-curtain by,
And glanced **athwart**²⁹ the **glooming**³⁰
flats³¹.

She only said, "The night is **dreary**¹⁵,
He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
She said, "I am **awear**¹⁷", **awear**,
I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the **night-fowl**³² **crow**³³:
The cock sung out an hour **ere**²¹ light:
From the dark **fen**³⁴ the oxen's **low**³⁵
Came to her³⁶: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk **forlorn**³⁷,
Till cold winds woke the grey-eyed morn³⁸
About the lonely **moated**¹³ **grange**¹⁴.
She only said, "The day is **dreary**¹⁵,
He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
She said, "I am **awear**¹⁷", **awear**,
I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

¹ **moss** – (*Muscineae*) carpet-like flowerless green plant

² **flower-plot** – flower bed

³ **thickly** – densely

⁴ **crusted** – coated, covered

⁵ **one and all** – every single one

⁶ **rusted** – (*offerrous objects*) rusty, oxidized

⁷ **knot** – fastening

⁸ **shed** – simple wooden building for storing tools, etc.

⁹ **clinking** – clanging, making a metallic sound

¹⁰ **latch** – simple mechanism for fastening a gate

¹¹ **weeded** – full of weeds (= wild plants)

¹² **thatch** – roof covering consisting of straw (= dried plants)

¹³ **moated** – surrounded by a defensive ditch filled with water

¹⁴ **grange** – farm, country house

¹⁵ **dreary** – desolate, sombre, depressing

¹⁶ **cometh not** – isn't coming

¹⁷ **awear** – (*poetic*) weary, exhausted

¹⁸ **I would that I were** – I wish I was

¹⁹ **dew** – condensation from atmospheric vapour

²⁰ **at even** – in the evening

²¹ **ere** – (*poetic*) before

²² **this beautiful couplet may be compared with a couplet of Helvius Cinna: Te matutinus flentem conspexit Eous, / Te flentem paullo vidit post Hesperus idem.**

²³ **at morn** – in the morning

²⁴ **eventide** – in the evening

²⁵ **flitting** – flying, flapping, flight

²⁶ **thickest** – deepest, most impenetrable

About a **stone-cast**³⁹ from the wall
A **sluice**⁴⁰ with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er⁴¹ it many, round and small,
The cluster'd **marish-mosses**⁴² crept.
Hard by⁴³ a **poplar**⁴⁴ **shook**⁴⁵ **alway**⁴⁶,
All silver-green with **gnarled**⁴⁷ **bark**⁴⁸.

²⁷ **did trance** – (*emphatic*) tranced, caused (the sky) to be in a stupor

²⁸ **casement** – window

²⁹ **athwart** – across

³⁰ **glooming** – sombre-looking, depressing

³¹ **flats** – (*in this case*) flatlands

³² **night-fowl** – nocturnal bird

³³ **to crow** – squawk, make a characteristic loud noise

³⁴ **fen** – marshland, wetland

³⁵ **to low** – moo, bellow

³⁶ **came to her** – reached her, (*in this case*) was heard by her

³⁷ **forlorn** – in a melancholic way, despondently

³⁸ **cf. Romeo and Juliet, II.iii.1, "The grey morn (= morning) smiles on the frowning night".**

³⁹ **a stone-cast** – a stone's throw, +/- 20 metres

⁴⁰ **sluice** – (*in this case*) artificial water channel

⁴¹ **o'er** – (*poetic*) over

⁴² **marish-mosses** – marsh moss, algae

⁴³ **hard by** – close-by, nearby

⁴⁴ **poplar** – (*Populus nigra*) a tall straight tree

⁴⁵ **to shake** (shake-shook-shaken) – tremble

⁴⁶ **alway** – (*archaic*) always

For **leagues**⁴⁹ no other tree did mark⁵⁰
 The **level**⁵¹ **waste**⁵², the **rounding**⁵³ grey.
 She only said, "My life is **dreary**¹⁵,
 He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
 She said, "I am **awearry**¹⁷, weary,
 I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the **shrill**⁵⁴ winds were up and away,
 In the white curtain, **to and fro**⁵⁵,
 She saw the **gusty shadow**⁵⁶ **sway**⁵⁷.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their cell,
 The shadow of the **poplar**⁴⁴ fell
 Upon her bed, across her **brow**⁵⁸.
 She only said, "The night is **dreary**¹⁵,
 He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
 She said, "I am **awearry**¹⁷, weary,
 I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

All day within the **dreamy**⁵⁹ house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
 The blue fly sung **i'**⁶⁰ the **pane**⁶¹; the mouse
 Behind the **mouldering**⁶² **wainscot**⁶³
shriek'd⁶⁴,
 Or from the **crevice**⁶⁵ **peer'd about**⁶⁶.
 Old faces **glimmer'd**⁶⁷ **thro'**⁶⁸ the doors,
 Old footsteps **trod**⁶⁹ the upper floors,
 Old voices called her **from without**⁷⁰.

⁴⁷ **gnarled** – knotty, rough. lumpy

⁴⁸ **bark** – the natural protective covering of a tree

⁴⁹ **league** – (in this case) distance of three miles (= 5km)

⁵⁰ 'dark' in the 1842 version

⁵¹ **level** – flat

⁵² **waste** – (in this case) wasteland, wilderness

⁵³ **rounding** – surrounding

⁵⁴ **shrill** – piercing, penetrating; high-pitched and loud

⁵⁵ **to and fro** – back and forth, backwards and forwards

⁵⁶ **gusty shadow** – shadow created by the movement of the white curtain in the intermittent breeze

⁵⁷ **to sway** – oscillate

⁵⁸ **brow** – forehead

⁵⁹ **dreamy** – that seemed to be in a dream

⁶⁰ **i'** – in

⁶¹ **pane** – glass in a window

⁶² **mouldering** – decomposing

⁶³ **wainscot** – lower part of the walls of a room covered in wood panelling

⁶⁴ **to shriek** – (in this case) squeal, squeak

⁶⁵ **crevice** – fissure, grifice

⁶⁶ **to peer about** – look furtively around

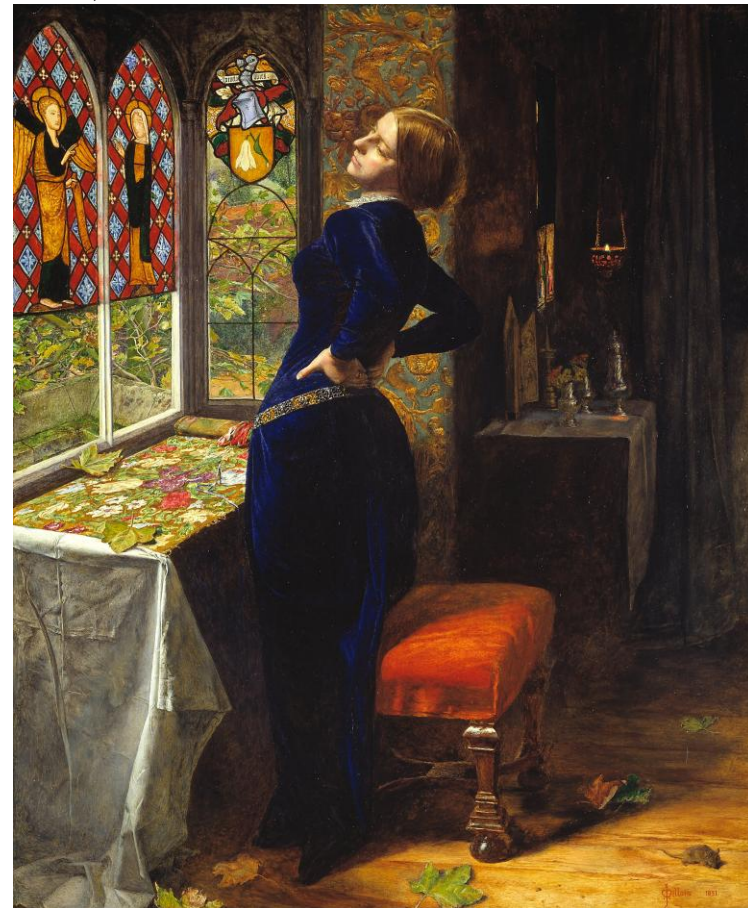
⁶⁷ **to glimmer** – shine faintly

⁶⁸ **thro'** – through

⁶⁹ **to tread** (tread-trod-trodden) – walk

She only said, "My life is **dreary**¹⁵,
 He **cometh not**¹⁶", she said;
 She said, "I am **awearry**¹⁷, weary,
 I would that I were¹⁸ dead!"

The sparrow's **chirrup**⁷¹ on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound,
 Which to the **wooing**⁷² wind **aloof**⁷³
 The **poplar**⁴⁴ made, **did all confound**⁷⁴
 Her sense; but most she **loathed**⁷⁵ the hour
 When the **thick-moted**⁷⁶ sunbeam lay
Athwart²⁹ the **chambers**⁷⁷, and the day
 Was sloping toward his western **bower**⁷⁸.
 Then, said she, "I am very **dreary**¹⁵,
 He will not come", she said;
 She wept, "I am **awearry**¹⁷, weary,
 O God, **that I were**⁷⁹ dead!"



⁷⁰ **from without** – from outside

⁷¹ **to chirrup** – chirp, tweet, twitter

⁷² **wooing** – amorous, flirtatious

⁷³ **aloof** – unresponsive

⁷⁴ **did all confound** – confused

⁷⁵ **to loathe** – hate detest

⁷⁶ **thick-moted** – full of specks of dust

⁷⁷ **chamber** – (old fashioned) room

⁷⁸ **bower** – pavilion, (in this case) place of rest

⁷⁹ **that I were** – I wish I was